

## MOREHEAD PRESIDENT AWAITING VERDICT OF REGENTS



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Even in August's swelter, the hillside campus is green and lush, awaiting the students who begin returning today for another term, another year.

Classes at Morehead State University are scheduled to begin this week, but in a real sense, nothing will begin at Morehead this semester until Friday night is over.

That's when Morehead's 10-member board of regents will meet to decide whether to extend President Herb F. Reinhard Jr.'s contract, which expires in June.

Until then, nearly everything in this snug little college town is - as it has been all summer - on hold.

"It's apparently the biggest thing in Eastern Kentucky," said Reinhard, shaking his head. "They ought to sell tickets."

Reinhard, 54, a Covington native who came to Morehead last year from the presidency of Slippery Rock (Pa.) University, is at the vortex of the latest controversy to swirl around the Rowan County campus.

He was hired to help rid Morehead of controversy, among other things, but it now appears that he - not the controversy - may be going.

The way Reinhard sees it, the issue is as much about Morehead's future as his own. He said a top state official told him recently, "I see you're trying to drag Morehead kicking and screaming into the 20th century."

Reinhard's dilemma began in July 1984 when he marched crisply onto the troubled Morehead campus and quickly began to reorganize the school's administrative and academic structure.

In the process, he apparently kicked over the community's status quo. He reassigned some top-level administrators with longstanding ties to the community, agitated several veteran faculty members and apparently upset some regents.

That became evident last April when the regents voted 5-4 to table Reinhard's initial request for a one-year extension on his two-year contract.



Some regents who voted to shelve the measure said they did not think Reinhard had been in office long enough to evaluate, but one regent criticized him for "doing things in such haste . . . without giving people a chance to prove whether they were right or wrong."

Faculty regent John Duncan, who also voted to table Reinhard's request, said he thought Reinhard's problem was more style than substance, but two other regents hinted broadly last week at other objections.

Reinhard's supporters, on the other hand, include many students and many alumni outside the Morehead area who say he is exactly what Morehead has needed for years: a bold, progressive educator, unfettered by political attachments, unafraid to tackle Morehead's longstanding image problems.

"I really hate to see them move on the guy," said a wealthy Johnson County coal operator who graduated from Morehead in the late 1960s. "He's just doing what he was hired to do. That's no reason to run him off."

Whether Reinhard, in fact, will be run off remains to be seen, but it is significant that three of the 10 regents who hired him are no longer on the board.

The three new regents - Patricia Burchett of Paintsville, Walter Carr of Morehead and Eunice H. Caston of Winchester, appointed last year by Gov. Martha Layne Collins - all voted against Reinhard's request, along with Rowan Circuit Judge James Richardson of Owingsville and John Duncan.

Board chairman Robert M. "Mike" Duncan of Inez, veteran regent Lloyd Cassity of Ashland, Dr. Forest Skaggs of Lynch and student regent Mike Fox voted for Reinhard's request.

Earlier this summer, Mrs. Caston, 68, a retired elementary schoolteacher, said she probably would switch her vote and agree to extend Reinhard's contract.

She declined, however, to pledge her vote last week. "I won't say," she said. "If I'm making a decision of any importance, I always pray over it and I do what my conscience tells me."

The swing votes, then, may lie with two regents who did not vote in April: Harry LaViers Jr. of Irvine, who missed the meeting, and Margaret Holt, 20, of Radcliffe in Hardin County, a Morehead junior who will be sworn in as student regent on Friday.

Holt declined to comment, and LaViers could not be reached.

Several other regents interviewed this week said they had made up their minds, but only two would discuss their decisions.

Carr, 65, a Morehead graduate whose wife, Jewell, was Collins' campaign manager in Rowan County, said he would vote against extending Reinhard's contract.



"I'd like to say a lot of things," said Carr, but he declined to elaborate. He did say, "Politics doesn't have a thing to do with this. I'm just concerned about my university. This school has been one of the most important things in my life."

Regent Skaggs, 62, of Lynch, a Brown administration appointee, said he intended to support Reinhard.

"I feel he's done an excellent job," said Skaggs, a retired dentist. "He's done what we hired him to do toward changing the image of Morehead State University."

"My wife and I were on campus last week and we both were pleasantly surprised. The place looked well taken care of. People were cleaning up and actually doing what they were supposed to be doing."

One regent, who asked that his comments not be attributed to him, said he longed for peace and quiet. "If I vote against him, it'll be because I don't believe he can get things settled down," he said.

Board chairman Mike Duncan said he tended to support extension of Reinhard's contract, but would go through the "evaluation process" at Friday's meeting before making up his mind.

"Also, I want to hear what the other board members have to say," he said.

Duncan, who says he will not seek another term as regent chairman in 1986

because he is becoming president of the Kentucky Bankers Association, said the regents would review Reinhard's relationship with the community and the school's faculty, students and alumni.

The panel also will be asked to consider the effect that seeking another president might have on those groups, the chairman said.

Reinhard has been busy in recent weeks collecting evidence to support his actions and fending off speculation.

One rumor, he said, had him standing up before Friday's meeting gets under way and announcing his departure, regardless of how the regents vote.

"That's interesting," Reinhard said, "because I don't know where I'd leave to."

Another rumor blamed him for a contract given a coach before Reinhard arrived on campus.

"I think it would have been better for everybody if this had been settled in April," he said. "This doesn't help anybody."

Instead, Morehead has been hurt, he said.



Records show, he said, that fund raising at Morehead was on its way to an all-time high in April and then "just dropped off the table."

Reinhard makes no apologies for the swiftness of his actions, pointing out that many of his policies had existed at other universities for years.

"I haven't heard anybody criticize the decisions that were made, only the quickness with which they were made," he said. "Across the board, in any area you look at, we're a different and far better institution than we were a year ago."

Reinhard pointed out that in 10 "major changes" submitted to the board between July 1984 and April this year, all were approved with one "no" vote.

"It wasn't like I was pushing buttons," he said.

In the 10 changes, faculty regent John Duncan abstained on the reassignment of all but one cabinet-level administrator and the separation of the campus security force from the Morehead police department.

At least one regent apparently was also displeased when the college decided to begin giving scholarships on merit instead of distributing them among county school superintendents, Reinhard said.

"What it boils down to is that some school districts are getting more (scholarships) than others," he said.

"To me, that seems natural," Reinhard said, but he said some superintendents in Eastern Kentucky apparently favored using the scholarship money for local politics rather than worry about the future of Morehead.

"I think the root of our problem here is that so many of our people grew up thinking that this is the way you do things," he said.

Adron Doran, a former state House speaker, was the college's president for 23 years before his longtime aide, Morris Norfleet, succeeded him in 1976.

Reinhard said the previous administrations apparently hired some employees who, while good people, were not professionally qualified. The same apparently was true of some others who went to work for Morehead after graduation and advanced in a "good old boy" system requiring a talent for saying "Yes, sir," he said.

Norfleet, who is back on the Morehead campus as a college official, could not be reached for comment.

Doran, now a Louisville resident, said he had done his "dead-level best" to stay out of the Reinhard controversy. But he said, "I deny (Reinhard) has brought in any people of higher qualifications than those he



has removed."

Doran also denied that Morehead was operated politically during his tenure, although he pointed out that "higher education is an entity of the state, and state government is the science of politics."

"That's what government is," Doran said, "but that doesn't mean it's bad politics."

Reinhard, however, points out that one regent consistently refers to the Morehead board as "the school board" and says the college has been "simply imitating the politics of Eastern Kentucky and we ought to be above that."

Reinhard described Morehead as "an excellent college town" populated by 7,000 people who are "with some exceptions, very supportive of the university."

"Our problems have come on campus for the most part," he said, mentioning a "split" faculty and, "to some extent," staff.

When he arrived last year, buildings and grounds were run down and no inventory of equipment existed. "A subculture on campus," he said, would "take anything."

At the same time, there were three conflicting policy manuals and the

college was treating its students "like junior high school kids," he said.

On one hand, students were subjected to apparently illegal room searches "for safety reasons" and were expelled for possessing "full or empty" beer bottles, he said.

And while some students flunked out, others with lower grades were allowed to stay in school because they happened to have the right name, he said.

Referring to problems that have embarrassed previous Morehead administrations, Reinhard said, the "objectivity with which we are now treating students," a new affirmative action plan for hiring minorities and women, the creation of a faculty Senate, among others programs have been approved "and are being enforced."

Reinhard said he had no plans to talk with regents about his contract.

"If the contract is extended, I plan to talk to them about the future," he said. "I want to stay at MSU. I think we've got great potential. We've got a whole region to serve that is probably the most desperate in the nation when it comes to education.

"We've got the potential to serve it, to improve the quality of life, but not when we're in one hot-water

situation after another.

"Doing things as we've done in the past has resulted in declining enrollment and not the best reputation in the world. We've not lived up to our responsibility, but we can.

"That's what this whole vote's about."

Caption: Photo Color Herald-Leader/David Perry Last April the Morehead regents voted 5-4 to table REINHARD'S request for a year's contract extension. HERB REINHARD says Morehead's future key issue.

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